

stability. The reconciliation of both national and international needs under the stress of war is being effected under our eyes. It will issue in a durable peace when men, as in science itself, are the servants of some purpose capable of satisfying their spiritual instincts and setting them on a new adventure in the quest of higher things.

## DOMINATION OR RELATIONSHIP?

### The Impulse to Dominate

By D. W. Harding. Pp. 256. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1941.) 7s. 6d. net.

ANY serious attempt to survey the psychological causes of war is noteworthy. But a work which leads logically and inevitably to the conclusion that war is inherent in our social pattern, relying as this essentially does upon dominative and prestige values, must challenge our best attention. In D. W. Harding's book, the author traces our individual failure in responsibility to two main problems. On one hand we need to become aware of certain unconscious tendencies which have fostered, and still maintain, the relation of domination or submission as the evolutionary ground-pattern in the development of our social and international relationships. On the other hand, the extreme complexity of the political issues of the great modern States makes it well-nigh impossible for the inexpert citizen, however intelligent, to participate responsibly in the crucial decisions of statesmanship. Since little can be done to reduce the latter factor to manageable proportions, the author wisely focuses attention upon those unconscious tendencies which can be largely modified through the cultivation of psychological responsibility.

Without minimizing the contribution which Freud and his followers have made in reducing the cause of war to the existence of infantile aggression and sadism, the author trims the balance by bringing into relief the basic dominative pattern which pervades our whole social atmosphere and which, therefore, must be regarded as a *representation collective* (Lévy-Bruhl), namely, an emotional preconception which everybody acts upon but nobody thinks.

Inasmuch as the author has called his work "The Impulse to Dominate", one could have wished for more enlightenment on the immense biological tail which civilized man has to draw after him in the realm of these archaic instincts. The general relation of the impulse to dominate to an underlying sense of insecurity is correctly stressed, but the perspective whereby this civilized mechanism is seen to derive its original dynamism from the primordial state whence, through the creation of communal solidarity, precarious solitariness was converted into a status of biological power and superiority, is strangely omitted. The author discusses Perry's anthropological evidence in support of the theory that violence is a cultural product and not, therefore, indigenous to our fundamental instinctual make-up. But Perry's contention that aggressiveness is a kind of diffusional accident is shown to be psychologically untenable, since it is impossible to believe that human beings could have built up a fundamental social structure which had no relation to their basal instincts. The fact that certain primitive tribes make violence their primary concern, while others, like

the Eskimo, have produced an effective cultural breakwater against aggression, merely illustrates the difference of attitude with which the primitive mind has become adapted to a vital social problem. Perry's anthropological evidence is none the less significant. If the Eskimo have succeeded in creating a non-aggressive social pattern by a peculiar sense for communal responsibility, it is surely possible for us in the face of immediate necessity to cultivate the integrative pattern of relationship instead of the dominative. This fundamental change in attitude comes into the realm of the feasible, when it is borne in mind that the impulse to dominate is countered by its opposite, which might be called communal solidarity, or relatedness. When the one hypothesis leads us to the very brink of chaos, it is conceivable that a human migration towards the other pole will eventually create a sense of community among men in which the bare threat of domination will evoke instant response like that of the fire-alarm. The nation-wide discipline of fire-watching could even be regarded as a first step towards the development of a general attitude of responsibility in regard to the latent archaic potentialities in human nature. The author's insistence throughout the book upon the superiority of the integrative type of relation—based essentially upon a living feeling for human individuality—is supported by psycho-therapeutic experience. It is indeed in the cultivation of a relation of candour between patient and doctor, in which the distinctiveness and totality of the personality are unreservedly accepted, that the healing value lies.

From the psychological point of view, the only criticism of Harding's work that can be made (though a significant one) is the omission of any reference to the general dynamic determinants which are comprised in the various national myths. The myth of a people is more than a poetic heirloom. It is an incalculable storehouse of explosive energy, as we have seen to our cost in the resurgence of the tribal myth in Germany and Japan. The term 'pattern' is altogether too static and thin to comprehend the stupendous reserves of energy-potential which are evoked from the racial unconscious in times of national crisis. This omission is all the more singular inasmuch as the author's somewhat discursive review of the various regressive social phenomena of war-time, such as acquiescence, credulity, sadism, cruelty and sexual interest, demands just this comprehensive conception of the activation of the archaic unconscious to bring the total picture into a comprehensive focus. In point of fact, it was the abundance of similar evidence of archaic social tendencies which led Jung in the first place to postulate the existence of a general unconscious. The author perceives the psychological inadequacy of the attempt to explain the war-time psyche from analysable factors in the personal unconscious, but he apparently recoils from the wider conception which could alone make it intelligible. The path which Trotter blazed during the War of 1914-18 in his "Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War" served us well for a time; but, since Trotter wrote, psychology has placed valuable tools in our hands which cannot be ignored.

Harding's work is compact and readable. If it has suffered from the exigencies of war-time economy, this necessary circumscription will make the book accessible to a larger public. It is a work that merits wide acceptance.

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